

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS**

**FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP OF THE
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Markup of H.Con.Res.34 Honoring the life of Percy Lavon Julian
Wednesday January 24, 2007, 10:00 am
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

I am pleased to honor one of our nation's greatest scientists, Dr. Percy Lavon Julian. The breadth and depth of his work left a profound legacy that inspires us all.

Dr. Julian was not defined by a single discipline; rather, he set an example of what an innovative mind is capable of achieving, against all odds. His ingenious cortisone synthesis dropped the price of the drug's production, allowing it to be made available to many people suffering from joint pain and other inflammation. While many remember him for his novel synthesis of glaucoma and rheumatoid arthritis drugs, Percy Julian is also noted for inventing a fire-extinguishing foam for gasoline and oil fires.

His inventions are even more notable because of the world in which they took place. At a time when there were very few faculty positions available to African Americans in the United States, Julian built his research portfolio by finding opportunities at all-black universities and overseas. Through his many years of teaching, he became known as a first-class educator, and a man who always looked to build bridges between races. For this reason, he is remembered as both an eminent scientist and a public servant.

It is my hope that pioneers like Dr. Julian will inspire the students of today who wonder why they need to persevere in studying science and math and will encourage them that these skills can directly benefit the public good. Today we still do not have minorities and women well-represented in science, technology, engineering and math fields. Despite efforts to reverse these trends, in the last ten years the percentage of black engineering undergraduate students has steadily declined. While the minority share of advanced degrees in science and engineering is improving as a whole, the physical and computer sciences disciplines still suffer dramatic under-representation by women and minorities.

I am pleased the Committee is considering this bill, and thank my colleague Mrs. Johnson for introducing the Resolution.